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18 May 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE HONORABLE EDWARD W. BARRETT
Assistant Secretary of State

SUBJECT:

REFERENCE: Memorandum dated May 8 from Mr. Barnard to Mr.
Barrett, same subject.

1. Whereas I am aware of and appreciate the discomfort which is being occasioned the State Department by the undesirability of informing Congressmen and others having ideas about as to what is being done in this field, I do not feel that the recommendation contained in the reference memorandum is the best solution of the problem, and I should like to have you consider the following alternative ideas.

2. You will recall that one of the very important functions which it is felt the new Psychological Strategy Board can perform would be that of acting as the open-to-the-public reception point for ideas and recommendations in the field of psychological warfare, with the thought that in this way our agency and, to a certain extent, the Departments of State and Defense would be protected. In other words, the Psychological Strategy Board would serve as a receiving and screening point and should be equipped with a skilled public relations officer who would respond to correspondence and inquiries in such a way as to give satisfaction to interested individuals that their ideas are not being ignored, and at the same time protect the operating agencies from direct assault and exposure. We have not yet reached the point where we are prepared to acknowledge that we have important operating responsibilities in the field of psychological warfare, even though I acknowledge the existence of a general awareness on the part of the public and the Congress that the CIA has some responsibilities in this general field.

3. We all hope and are pressing toward the accomplishment of the few remaining steps which must be taken before the Psychological Strategy Board can be officially unveiled and announced.

In the interim

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In the interim I would suggest that the Departments of State and Defense continue to protect us on a "non-committal basis", with the exception that in cases of individuals who are not willing to accept this treatment and insist upon more precise information concerning their proposals, these cases be referred to us for handling on a case-by-case basis. This should relieve the Departments of State and Defense of the most serious pressures without involving us in general exposure. We would not wish to see the Department adopt a practice of "giving up" the CIA on a routine basis.

FRANK G. WISNER
Assistant Director for
Policy Coordination

OPC/FGW/bjm

cc: Mr. Dulles ✓
General Magruder

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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

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FROM:

ADPC

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